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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

A) "China Is Missing Another Opportunity for [Cross-Strait] Peace"

Lin Cheng-yi, research fellow at the National Chengchi University's Institute of International Relations, said in a commentary in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" (12/30):

". On one hand, Beijing said it will deal with Taiwan independence at all costs; it lashed out at the United States' arms sales to Taiwan, saying the move did not contribute to cross-Strait stability; and it continues increasing ground-to-ground missile deployment against Taiwan. On the other hand, however, Beijing said it wants to pursue 'four environments,' namely, a peaceful and stable international environment, a friendly neighboring environment, an environment for equal and reciprocal cooperation, and an environment for objective and friendly public opinion. In fact, it is highly difficult for Beijing to seek to strike a balance between these two contradictory directions. But Taiwan is so occupied with internal struggle and dealing with three battlefields at the same time - the battlefield between the ruling and opposition parties in Taiwan, between two sides of the Taiwan Strait, and between the United States and Taiwan - that it has provided Beijing with a wonderful opportunity to isolate the island. Other countries such as France, the United States, Singapore and Australia, have all made strongly-worded statements against Taiwan and commented on Taiwan's political development from Beijing's perspective. .

". While seeking to make its national defense transparent, Beijing is also releasing a signal that it will 'fight against the United States and intimidate Taiwan.' But the more Beijing emphasizes the use of force and the more high-handed it gets, the more it proves that its Taiwan policy has failed to work and that both sides of the Taiwan Strait are moving apart from each other.

"To address China's 'anti-secession law,' Taiwan's top priority is not to split from the inside. The DPP government must first try to coordinate between Taiwan and the United States and between the ruling and opposition parties inside Taiwan if it wants to reduce its three battlefields and three rivals to one battlefield (the cross-Strait one)."

B) "Can Washington, Beijing and Taipei Get off the Train and Talk for a While?"

Wu Yu-shan, research fellow and director of the preparatory office for the Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica, said in an op-ed piece of the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" (12/30):

". When the train that Taiwan is riding [i.e. Taiwan's constitutional re-engineering] starts to crash into the train on which Beijing is riding [i.e. China's anti-secession law], Washington is actually sitting on Taiwan's train. Given its powerful strength, the United States could add great weight to Taiwan's train. But Washington does not want to see the train crash, so it started to warn Taiwan's train driver using harsh words like 'Taiwan's leader is trying to destroy the status quo,' or 'Taiwan is not a sovereign state.' The question is whether Washington values Taiwan's strategic position and if it sees Beijing as a long-term hypothetical enemy of the United States. Washington has natural feelings in favor of the democratic Taiwan, so it does not want to get off the train. As a result, for the Taiwan train driver, no matter how harsh Washington scolds him, as long as it still stays on the train, the Taiwan train is much stronger than that of Beijing's and it does not fear crashing against Beijing's train. If Beijing keeps its senses, it will not go into a showdown with the United States. In other words, Beijing might be the one that steps on the brake eventually during this train crash

incident. .

". Since both sides of the Taiwan Strait have walked away from the hypothetical framework of the `interim agreement,' will Washington be able to re-gain control of the [cross-Strait] situation? For Washington, the best way to remove the ultimate cause of trouble is to say clearly that it will not support Taiwan when the latter declares independence and thus triggers a war across the Taiwan Strait. In other words, the United States is saying that it is ready to get off the train and does not want to play games together with Taiwan any more. This is the real meaning behind [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Richard] Armitage's `landmine' remarks and his statement that [Washington] `is not required to defend Taiwan.' Armitage's words have created a great impact in Taiwan because if Washington gets off the train, the whole situation will change. But since the American officials like [Secretary of State Colin] Powell and Armitage who recently made statements criticizing Taiwan will get off the train of the Bush administration first, Taiwan is still watching and waiting [for further development]. Nonetheless, it will still be very dangerous no matter whether the situation turns out to be that the United States stays on Taiwan's train which crashes with the train of Beijing or the United States gets off the train and leaves Taiwan's train to crash with Beijing's. ."

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